DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 960 EA 025 445

AUTHOR Peterson, Kent D.; Warren, Valli D.
TITLE Changes in School Governance and Principals' Roles: Changing Jurisdiction, New Power Dynamics and Conflict in Restructured Schools.
INSTITUTION Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, Madison, WI.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE Nov 93
CONTRACT R117Q00005-93
NOTE 25p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; Conflict Resolution; Decentralization; Elementary Secondary Education; *Governance; Organizational Theories; *Participative Decision Making; *Politics of Education; Power Structure; *Principals; School Based Management

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the transformed governance structures of four schools engaged in systemic restructuring efforts and looks at how those transformations have affected principals' roles by reshaping the micropolitical environment of the school. Principals' roles have changed as: (1) decision-making jurisdictions are redrawn; (2) power dynamics are reshaped; and (3) conflict has increased. Although the study involved 6 schools--2 elementary, 2 middle, and 2 secondary--this paper presents information on the elementary and middle schools. Data were gathered through observation, surveys of teachers and students, interviews with teachers and administrators, and document analysis. Although the schools' governance systems differed, all had more decentralized decision making and teacher discretion than is typically found in schools. Findings indicate that in their new roles, principals address uncertainty, spend more time in formal and informal meetings to cope with the complexity of expanded micropolitics and influence decision making, and mediate conflict. Although changes in school governance have often increased teachers' sense of empowerment, it has substantially changed the principal's role, transforming it into a complex role centered within the micropolitical environment of the school. (LMI)

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ED 363 960

CHANGES IN SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND PRINCIPALS' ROLES: CHANGING JURISDICTIONS, NEW POWER DYNAMICS AND CONFLICT IN RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS

Kent D. Peterson
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Valli D. Warren
University of Wisconsin-Madison

November 1993

FINAL DELIVERABLE TO OERI NOVEMBER 30, 1993

For publication in J. Murphy & K. S. Louis (Eds.), *Reshaping the Principalship: Insights from Transformational Reform Efforts*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

This paper was prepared at the Center on Organization and Restructuring of Schools, supported by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement (Grant No. R117Q00005-93) and by the Wisconsin Center for Education Research, School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the supporting agencies.

Acknowledgements: We would like to thank Karen Seashore Louis and Joseph Murphy for their helpful comments on an earlier draft.

EA 025 445

INTRODUCTION

One of the most common types of school restructuring involves transforming governance so that more decisions are decentralized to schools (sometimes called site based management) and more decision making authority is shared with teachers and, occasionally, parents. These changes are designed to improve the functioning of schools, but also may affect the micropolitical environment of schools and the roles of principals.

In this chapter we will examine the transformed governance structures of four schools who are engaged in widespread restructuring efforts and look at how these transformations have affected the role of principals by reshaping the micropolitical environment of the school. This research examines two elementary and two middle schools from a sample of six schools identified through a national search for schools that had restructured across several areas. The study examines four schools, who, unlike some, are engaged in many forms of restructuring, with changes in governance only one of them.

While many aspects of principal's work have changed due to decentralization, we will note three features of this change. There are many others, but these three appear to be tied to changes in governance. Principals' roles have changed as (1) decision making jurisdictions are redrawn, (2) power dynamics are reshaped and (3) conflict increased. First, the development of new governance structures has affected the ways decisions are divided up and decision making jurisdictions for teachers, principals and parents have changed. At times this affects teachers' sense of empowerment, micropolitical activity, and the roles of principals. Second, these new approaches to governance have brought changes in internal

and external power dynamics, opening up more opportunities for staff and parents to influence school decisions and policies, but making the principal's role more politically demanding, uncertain, and complex. Finally, new governance structures seem to foster increased conflict in some schools, conflict that reshapes the tasks and roles of principals by increasing the need to mediate, negotiate and resolve disputes.

Changes in governance influence and reshape the micropolitical environment of schools. In these schools, it reconfigures the power and work of school principals and teachers, increases political activity, and increases uncertainty and conflict. We will look at changes that occur in schools attempting broad-based restructuring.

Some research on school decentralization and shared decision making examines the nature and dynamics of micropolitics at the school level, but this perspective still has not produced a large set of systematic studies across multiple sites (Blase, 1991). In many schools that are restructuring governance this perspective provides some useful issues to consider. As Blase (1991), Ball and Bowe (1991) and others have suggested, schools are places where individuals and groups seek to maximize their values and goals by exerting power in formal and informal arenas. When decision making and governance structures are transformed, jurisdictions changed, the micropolitics of the school is affected, conflict may heighten and the roles of school principals shift.

Decentralization and shared decision making are some of the more common approaches to restructuring, yet the consequences for the school and for principals have seldom been examined in schools that are restructuring in a variety of ways. The four schools described in this chapter are a special sample because they are attempting to make

significant changes to many different aspects of their programs. Decentralization and shared decision making are only some of many changes they are undertaking. Thus, we are looking at the changes in schools that have a great deal of reform going on.

Selected Review of Literature

Decentralizing and involving key stakeholders in decision making are ways many districts reconfigure governance in current reform efforts (Clune and White, 1988; Malen, Ogawa and Kranz, 1990). This reform effort focuses on transforming governance structures, expanding the base of decision makers to include teachers, parents and others, and granting more discretion to the school level over such areas as curriculum and instruction, budget and personnel in an attempt to increase the commitment of local educators and improve the quality of decisions (Malen, Ogawa and Kranz, 1990; Weiss, 1992; Wohlstetter and Odden, 1991). While a number of studies have examined the nature of this reform and analyzed its rhetoric, relatively few have looked closely at the ways these reshaped governance systems have affected the micropolitics of the school and subsequently the roles and work of principals (Ball and Bowe, 1991; Malen, Ogawa and Kranz, 1990; Weiss, 1992; Peterson and Solsrud, 1993). While we cannot review every study in this chapter, several suggest that new governance structures will (1) redefine decision jurisdictions, (2) reshape the power dynamics of schools both internally and externally, and (3) raise the level of conflict which will affect the roles of principals (Ball and Bowe, 1991; Crow and Peterson,1992; Malen, Ogawa and Kranz, 1990; Weiss, 1992; Peterson and Solsrud, 1993). In this chapter we will

examine the ways changes in governance have affected these three themes and suggest ways the roles of principals have changed.

Conceptual Perspectives

For this chapter we will be using organizational theory and the micropolitical model as sensitizing frameworks for thinking about changes in governance structures and principals' roles. Organizational theory points to important relationships between governance structures and roles, the purpose of rules and procedures to coordinate decision making, and the nature of administrator work under differing conditions (Mintzberg, 1979). Current micropolitical models suggest that redistributions of power and changes in governance may affect the level of political activity, the nature of conflict, the formation of coalitions, forms of social power of various actors used to influence decisions, and the nature of administrative roles in different micropolitical environments (Blase, 1991; Ball and Bowe, 1991). These two complementary conceptual perspectives help us identify important patterns of individual and group behavior that are changing in these schools and their potential to change principals' roles.

Sample and Methodology

Data were collected in schools from across the United States for the School Restructuring Study. An extensive search was undertaken to find schools engaged in restructuring for two or more years in four areas including (1) student experiences, (2) the professional worklife of teachers, (3) leadership, management and governance, and (4)

relations with community agencies. Six schools (two elementary, two middle, and two secondary) were identified from over 200 who had been nominated, contacted through telephone interviews, and visited before selection for the sample. The information in the analysis does not include schools which have not restructured or which have only begun restructuring. For this analysis we use only the elementary and middle schools in order to avoid the potential problems of variation in governance processes, micropolitical environment, and principal's roles due to the complexity and structure of secondary schools.

A team spent a week on site in the fall and spring to gather data through direct observation, teacher and student surveys, and collection of various school documents and written materials including agendas and minutes of meetings and governance by-laws. Researchers observed classrooms, interviewed teachers, administrators and other key people, attended meetings, and observed activities in the school. These schools are rich examples of different governance contexts where the micropolitical environment is altered and principals' roles and responsibilities have changed.

The Teacher Questionnaire was developed at the center with items anchored in national data sets. The purpose of the survey is to gather data on the nature of instruction and teacher working conditions in restructured schools. Teachers in the four schools were asked to respond with their best estimates of the frequency of selected activities and for opinions on various aspects of school climate and governance. We will report on a small set of items from the survey (Table 2).

Table 1 Here

As we see in table 1, all of these schools have some school-level governing structures. These schools have substantially changed their governance systems by instituting school councils, in most cases giving teachers authority in decision making councils, and providing some discretion over curriculum, budget and personnel. Though each school's governance system is different, all have more decentralized decision making and more teacher discretion than is typically found in schools.

Portraits of Four Schools: Context and Governance Structures

School A is medium sized urban school with ninety percent of the student population being low income. The formal governance structure consists of overlapping layers of committees with the principal guiding and implementing plans and policy. The final authority on school-wide decisions rests with the entire faculty and is resolved within the context of weekly faculty meetings. Formally and informally teachers decide practices and policies. The process of making decisions is fluid and influenced by informal alliances and conversations.

School B is also a medium sized urban school. The school is committed to a faculty leadership system. An elected faculty member serves for two years in the leadership role without teaching responsibilities. Three additional faculty members are also elected to administrative roles, while maintaining full teaching loads. The formal governance structure consists of two organizational mechanisms for decision making, the school council and faculty meetings with various committees formed around issues and topics. The teaching

leaders along with two parent representatives meet to discuss issues and make recommendations to the faculty on a variety of topics.

School C is a medium sized urban school as well. The school's power structure is evolving as bylaws are being written. The school council is the most important decision making body. This council runs the school either directly or through designated subcommittees with delineated authority structures. There are informal processes that circumvent the formal decision making practices.

School D is a small urban school. The school's governance structure is hierarchically organized with staff being divided into tiers through a differentiated staffing model. The faculty leaders determine what is appropriate for their school based on their vision and educational philosophy. The strong informal basis of decision making dominates the formal mechanism with faculty shared decision making often thwarted by the informal process.

All four schools have new decision making authority granted them by the district, involve teachers in decisions, have a complex and active micropolitical climate in the schools, and have changed the roles of principals (or their equivalents). Three themes emerge in these schools that point to ways that governance changes are reshaping schools and the role of principals. First, the transformation of jurisdictions is widespread. Second, new structures are producing new power dynamics. And, third, schools are experiencing increased levels and types of conflict. Each of these three themes suggests issues about how

changes in governance transforms the micropolitics of the school and thereby the work and roles of principals.

Themes and Issues in Restructured Schools

1. New Jurisdictions.

The governance structures in these four schools have changed the jurisdictions and shape of authority for teachers and principals by redrawing the decision areas of these stakeholders. In many traditional schools, decisions related to staffing, hiring, scheduling, and budgets are primarily the bailiwick of principals or perhaps central office. While teachers in some schools provide input or suggestions before decisions are made, they often do not have formal authority to make these decisions or to sit on councils that have that authority. In most schools, principals have "jurisdiction" over many of these decision and guard this right closely.

In contrast, in these four schools the traditional decision making jurisdictions of the principal have been "redrawn." Teachers and, in some cases, parents have been granted formal jurisdiction over many aspects of school policy and procedures including: teacher hiring and staffing decisions, school budgets, and curriculum. All four schools have some form of school council which provides a forum for discussion and a formal body for decision making. In addition, in School B the administrative role is held by a teacher elected by the staff and in school D differentiated staffing grants four teachers considerable power over issues related to curriculum and instruction. These new jurisdictions appear to have fostered

a greater sense of teacher empowerment, but they have created some tensions and dilemmas as well.

Principals' roles appear to shift in schools where there is greater staff empowerment. Teachers in these schools do feel more empowered. Data from surveys point to the degree to which teachers perceive themselves to have influence over policies and practices. As we see in Table 2, teachers overall feel that they are involved in decisions about textbooks, instructional materials, curriculum content, and teaching techniques. And, in general, teachers feel that they are involved in making decisions and voicing their opinions. This is not the case for School D where four lead teachers hold considerable power over other staff and use this power to influence many school decisions. Increased sense of empowerment seems to have increased the political roles of principals in part by placing them in more situations where active discussions, disagreements, and decisions occur.

Table 2 Here

The work of principals may also be changing due to problems brought on by new governance structures and demands. There seem to be tensions arising in schools due to the time it takes to be involved in governance. In School B teachers do not want any more budgetary discretion because they feel it would take too much time. Teachers who are on school councils, committees, and task forces which meet, discuss, and evaluate decisions voiced their concerns about the demands this places on them. These tensions are not limited to teachers, however, but have significant spillover effects on principals. First, principals need to coordinate the work of others to a greater extent. These schools have many active committees, task force groups, and governing bodies whose work generates more need to

coordinate actions. Second, the role of principals involves more political activity including mediating, bargaining, and persuading. In addition to the formal decision making bodies, considerable informal dialogue, coalition building, and politicking is occurring. This increased and widespread political activity has made the role of the principal more political and, it seems, more complex.

Finally, these new jurisdictional changes seem to have changed the ways some principals exert power. With less formal control over decision making, some principals are seeking different forms of social power and influence (French and Raven, 1960). As the new principal of School A noted, "My role [as principal] has made 180 degree turn since last year; now I am a facilitator, a collaborator." In School A the original principal combined both charisma and expert knowledge of the Accelerated Schools program to build a strong collaborative school culture. Where once principals could use formal authority to make or change a decision that rested within their jurisdiction, some of these principals are now at times relying on expert power based on knowledge or referent power based on personal charisma to influence decisions (French and Raven, 1960). Principals seem somewhat reluctant to use traditional approaches to formal authority or their veto power, especially if they are newly transferred to the building. When they do, as with the new principal in School A, they face the ire of their staff. Overall, principals must work in more decision making arenas where they do not have the formal authority they once had, thus changing their roles. They must employ a wider array of approaches to influence decisions and seem to be relying more on non-formal bases of power.

While new governance structures have meant new decision making jurisdictions, they also appear to have altered the power dynamics in the school in several ways that appear to be reshaping principals' roles.

2. Changes in Internal and External Power Dynamics

In these four schools changes in both the internal and external power dynamics have occurred. Changes in governance structures have provided new power to individuals and groups due to the new structures of decision making. From new committee roles to increased informal politics schools are experiencing shifts in and transformation of the micropolitical environment of the school and in relation to external constituencies. These shifts involve "the use of formal and informal power by individuals and groups to achieve their goals in the organization..." (Blase, 1991, p. 11) and appear to be reshaping the principal's roles in restructured contexts.

The new structures for governance and decision making provided principals and teachers, and sometimes parents time to discuss and act on a variety of issues, and in several schools provided authority to make decisions that directly affect teachers. But, in addition to these new formal structures, informal coalitions, interest groups, and individuals have emerged to influence or, in some cases, make decisions. These are both increasing the level and type of political activity in the internal micropolitical environment, but also increasing the complexity and breadth of coalition building. Principals in these schools often spend more time in the formal committees and councils, but also are involved in informal discussions

with new coalitions and informal leaders. We see this in School B where in addition to the school council numerous committees develop ideas and programs.

As Blase (1991) notes, when schools increase opportunities for decision making, there is likely to be more micropolitical activity in the school which will reshape principals' roles. Teachers who were granted more authority also seem willing to engage in more political actions, to develop coalitions, and to try to influence a variety of school level decisions. Principals, it appears, spend more time involved in these activities gathering information, listening and influencing decisions. For example, at School A informal meetings and gatherings are occasions for discussion of school issues. Groups along with the principal met in the smokers' lounge and on Friday's at a local bar where they discuss, negotiate, and develop ideas for the school. These coalitions and the level of political activity was probably fostered by the new governance structures, but also by a new climate that supported greater involvement in decisions. The new principal in School A had to work hard to discover ways to participate in the informal process. In other schools principals are coping with these more politically demanding contexts by attending meetings, being involved in discussions, and by analyzing more complex sets of coalitions.

The power dynamics of the school are also affected by the existence of governance structures instituted without clear or consistent governance processes for the flow of decision making, or its review and appeal. Schools have established new policy making structures and specified their form, function, and composition, but have not always defined a clear set of processes for the flow or review of decisions, or the adjudication of differences. Additionally, in some schools staff have chosen not to follow their own procedures for

making decisions when it fits their interests. This means that despite formal structures, there is no effective or consistent process for decision making and review. Principals face increased complexity and uncertainty in their roles due to these unclear governance processes. They face the complex task of helping manage decision making processes that are not always clear and to moderate potential conflict.

Without well defined structures and carefully developed processes for decision making and review, decision making and disagreements can go underground increasing conflict and discord. The result is that governing bodies can become more symbolic than substantive and principals may need to increase their information gathering and direct involvement. This complexity and uncertainty may also increase the stresses of an already demanding role.

Several examples of this will help illustrate these changes. At School C, the school council was used for many decisions but was circumvented when teachers felt their ideas for a new, progressive math and science curriculum would be overturned by affluent parents who desired more traditional approaches. Similarly, in School A, the process by which issues arrive at the faculty varied. Sometimes the school council or a committee made formal recommendations, and other times the principal or teachers made decisions without going through the school council. It was not clear what channel was the "required" one. As one teacher said, "For any problems, it just depends." Informal decision making and discussion flourishes in these schools, thus increasing the uncertainty of the principal's role and increasing the need to be more tied into informal networks of teachers and parents.

The existence of structures without clearly defined processes, can increase the level of uncertainty in the process and role stress for principals. It may encourage coalitions to

circumvent the formal structures thus increasing the intensity of behind-the-scenes politicking. Finally, issues related to equitable access to power may increase if individuals or groups are left out of decisions or not allowed into the "inner circles."

While one would expect that internal politics would be altered by changes, it appears that external political dynamics were also affected. In many traditional schools, it is the principal's role to buffer teachers from the community (Goldring and Rallis, 1993). With this group of schools, this seems to have occurred especially where schools had groups of affluent parents who were interested in exerting power over school decisions. For example, at School D when scores on standardized tests were not viewed as high enough, parents put pressure to improve curriculum in this area. As we have seen with School C, parents were pressing for more traditional approaches to math. In both these cases, external political pressure increased and had to be addressed both by teachers and by the principal. Thus it seems that these new governance patterns may foster more parent political activity and greater political pressure on both principals and decision making bodies.

In sum, changes in governance foster greater internal and external power dynamics that can make the principal's role more politically demanding and filled with more uncertainty and complexity. Where governance structures exist without clear decision making processes, it seems that informal micropolitics increases and potential inequities due to differential access to power may develop that reshape principal's work demands. All of these affect the role of principals as their power is no longer predominately based on formal authority, their time is spent in more governance activities and meetings, and the political environment around them has become significantly more active and complex.

3. Changes in Conflict.

The transformation of school governance systems also seems related to an increase in conflict in schools. While these conflicts may be mild and not necessarily destructive, the increased conflict does appear to be a consequence of the changes in the governance structure and the more active micropolitical environment of the school. The increased level and types of conflict expand the mediating and problem solving roles of principals, placing them in the midst of more disagreements, disputes and controversies than ever before.

Conflicts in these schools may increase and recast the principal's role for a number of reasons. There are more decision making groups, more forums for discussion and opportunities for decision making, and, in some cases it seems, a change in the normative climate that supports and even encourages more discussion, dialogue, and disagreement. More conflicts and disagreements arise among teachers from the various committees, councils, and informal coalitions that have grown and developed in these new governance systems. For example, in School A the increase in shared decision making seemed to foster more informal dialogue. Often this occurred in the smoking lounge that the original, highly respected principal frequented, but also Friday afternoons at a local bar where some staff met regularly to socialize. In School D, conflict increased because the formally designated "lead teachers" became a tight coalition that collaborated to maintain power and insure their views were most likely to gain ascendancy (we see evidence of this in the survey data, Table 2). In both these schools the increased formation of coalitions brought on increased conflict.

The existence of decision making opportunities may also support and encourage more political activity and conflict and change the work demands on administrators (Blase, 1991).

School cultures may reinforce norms of regular discussion, open disagreement and healthy conflict. This could in part explain the level of internal, mild conflict in some schools and perhaps suggest why staff were willing to engage in conflict and political pressure with central office and parents. This type of activity, rather than being seen as counternormative or even pathological, was sanctioned and almost becomes a routine part of being a staff member or principal in the school.

We see many types of conflict in several of the schools. In School B, staff disagreed over the role of the staff meeting convener in setting the agenda for meetings. In School A, though there was a strong shared mission, disputes did arise when a new principal used his veto to keep a teacher in a classroom role rather than make her a school "technology specialist." In School C, the teachers pressed central office to have more say over who would be the next principal. Finally, in School D, four teachers who were identified as providing leadership were in conflict with the rest of the regular teachers whom the four teachers saw as having not been granted the authority to make certain decisions about curriculum. While these are specific examples, in all the schools disagreements, discussions, and conflict appeared to be part of the routine of governance.

With increased conflict we find principals pulled into the role of mediator and conflict resolver in part because many have taken on this role before, but perhaps more importantly, because there are few formal mechanisms for resolving many of these conflicts and few processes defined in the governance system. With extensive new governance and decision making structures and few processes or procedures for review and resolution of differences, disputes frequently get resolved in informal settings, small group meetings, out-of-school get-

togethers, or through individual interactions during the day. Needless to say, these are neither the most open nor most efficient ways to deal with the many disagreements that occur during decentralized, shared governance.

Summary and Conclusions

While we need to know more about how principals' roles change when schools restructure governance, it seems clear that these alterations in the work context and roles of principals will be substantial. As we have seen in these four schools, first, the roles of principals are being transformed by new decision making jurisdictions as more individuals and groups become involved in governing schools. Principals face new demands with reshaped jurisdictions and may change their roles as they find themselves without many of the traditional forms of authority and in the midst of increased political activity. Second, principals' roles are being reshaped by the transformation of the political dynamics. Principals must address increased uncertainty as decision making flows through and around formal governance structures with unclear and inconsistent review and adjudication processes. These new political dynamics are increasingly complex and principal's time is being spent in more formal and informal meetings to cope with the complexity of expanded micropolitics and to influence decision making. Finally, principals' already demanding work has been influenced by increased conflict brought on by new governance structures. Principals are frequently finding themselves in the roles of conflict resolver or mediator.

While these changes in school governance have frequently increased the sense of empowerment of teachers and others, it has substantially changed the principal's role,

transforming it into a complex role centered within the micropolitical environment of schools. It has made the principal's role more demanding, more uncertain and more complex, demanding increased skills in analyzing complicated and at times perplexing political situations and requiring new understandings of decision making, shared power, and conflict resolution.

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Table 1

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES & PROCESSES IN RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS

LEVEL	ELEMENTARY		MIDDLE SCHOOL	
SCHOOLS	A	B	C	D
FORMAL STRUCTURES				
School Council	X	X	X	X
Committees	X	X	X	X
Faculty Meetings	X	X	X	X
DECISION MAKERS				
School Council	Principal Asst. Principal Teachers	Teachers Parents (non-voting)	Principal Teachers Parents Students	Teachers Parents
Faculty Meetings	Principal Teachers	Teachers	Principal Teachers	Teachers
DECISION AREAS	Curriculum Budget	Curriculum Budget Personnel	Curriculum Budget Personnel	Curriulum Budget Personnel
LEADERSHIP ROLE	Principal	Facilitator	Principal	Part-time Principal Differentiated Staffing

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS IN RESTRUCTURED SCHOOLS

LEVELS	ELEMENTARY		MIDDLE SCH	
SCHOOLS	A	B	C	D
	N=58	N=35	N=27	N=11
TQ9 How Much control do you feel you have in your TARGET CLASS over each of the following areas of your planning and teaching? (6 point scale)				
a. Selecting textbooks & other instructional materials	4.98 (1.50)	4.87 (1.18)	4.85 (1.18)	5.73 (.47)
b. Selecting content, topics, and skills to be taught	5.05 (1.48)	4.81 (1.22)	4.93 (1.33)	5.64 (.67)
c. Selecting teaching techniques	5.79 (.69)	5.55 (.68)	5.44 (1.12)	5.18 (1.47)
TQ20 Using the scale provided, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. (6 point scale)				
b. Staff are involved in making decisions that affect them.	5.83 (.42)	5.77 (.43)	5.26 (.98)	4.45 (1.21)
d. I feel comfortable voicing my concerns in this school.	5.09 (1.37)	5.31 (.93)	4.93 (1.57)	3.45 (1.63)
e. I feel that my ideas are listened to in this school.	5.14 (1.06)	5.17 (.95)	4.33 (1.64)	4.18 (1.47)
f. I have influence on the decisions within the school which directly affect me.	5.40 (.92)	5.26 (.92)	4.63 (1.42)	4.70 (1.16)
TQ21 How much *influence do teachers* have over school policy in each of the areas below? (6 point scale)				
d. Establishing the school curriculum	5.05 (1.07)	4.51 (1.50)	5.27 (.96)	5.00 (1.10)
e. Determining the school's schedule (including teacher prep periods)	4.43 (1.68)	3.94 (1.67)	5.07 (1.27)	5.00 (1.48)
f. Hiring new professional personnel	4.44 (1.58)	5.23 (1.06)	4.56 (1.42)	2.82 (1.89)
g. Planning school building budgets	3.59 (1.59)	2.34 (1.61)	4.00 (1.47)	2.73 (1.74)
h. Determining specific professional and teaching assignments	4.46 (1.57)	3.85 (1.67)	4.00 (1.53)	3.36 (1.86)

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